

PRAYER & FASTING GUIDE

Wednesday, June 1st

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INTRODUCTION

For the next several months we're going to be looking at different stories in the scriptures where prayer and fasting are mentioned. The hope is that we gain a more thorough understanding of all the purposes of prayer and fasting. I don't know about you, but it's easy for me to zoom in on one particular reason to pray and fast, for example, intimacy or friendship with the LORD and to forget that prayer and fasting has other purposes as well. I want us to explore these so that we are equipped to handle whatever comes at us, knowing how and when to apply prayer and fasting, both communally and individually.

PRAYER AND FASTING AS A REGULAR PART OF LIFE

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 13:1-3

Let's take note that the Holy Spirit does something really spectacular in this time of prayer and fasting — He highlights Paul and Barnabas for an evangelistic, church-planting, discipleship movement that took the gospel to places it never had been before. And so many lives were changed because of it. While the setting apart of these men, by the special work of the Spirit is part of what we see going on here, I actually want to set this aside and come back to it another month. I instead want us to see the simple fact that they engaged in prayer, fasting and worship, seemingly with no particular agenda and for no particular reason, it was just a part of their life.

This is a big reason why we set aside one day each month as a church family to pray and fast, we want it to simply become a part of the routine of our lives. There may not be sin that is causing us heartbreak, no spiritual forces that need to be driven out, no clarity that is needed for a decision (all of these being good and biblical reasons to fast), we might just be in a good place in life and with GOD. We want to create more time just for the LORD in our calendars. That's it. Just to be with him.

It's relationship that we're going after.

We do this with our friends when we go on roadtrips or camping or whatever your crew enjoys doing, right? We set things aside so that we have extra time to pour into our friendships, make memories, just enjoying the people around us.

This month as we pray and fast, if your heart is heavy or you need clarity for a decision, most certainly you can and should ask for the LORD to meet you in that. But if you don't, I encourage you to simply enjoy being with the LORD.



Here are some things I would suggest for how to engage with and enjoy the LORD through prayer and fasting today:

THANKSGIVING

I encourage you to start your time of prayer with some worship. Put on your favorite worship song and allow your eyes to be locked in on the LORD. Then, take some time to think about and thank the LORD for the good things in your life. What I'm discovering is that there is always something easy for me to find to complain about. However, I do not want to live that way. I want to acknowledge the good things in my life and the things the LORD is doing. Write the good things down if it helps you.

PEOPLE

Spend some time praying for specific people in your life that you care about, giving GOD thanks for them or asking for GOD to help them. Pray for those who don't know Jesus, that they would come to experience him. Pray for our church, specific people or general prayers. And pray for the people in our city that don't know Jesus.

WHAT YOU NEED

I also encourage you to lay out before the LORD what you need. Don't hold back, he knows your heart and thoughts, bring them to Him. Ask for what you desire. And ask that He would align your desires with his.

May you enjoy the LORD today. Maybe you'll have a special moment like the church did in Acts 13 or maybe you'll just enjoy time with him — either way...it's a win.